

DOUGAL HOUSE
Georgetown
3259 R Street, Northwest
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-837
DC, GEO, 233-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DOUGAL HOUSE

HABS NO. DC-837

Location: 3259 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Significance: Andrew Jackson Downing, designer of a romantic vision of the National Mall (not implemented) and the most romantic figure of nineteenth-century American design, wrote in 1850 of the need for truth in domestic architecture, that a country home reflect its function, its location, its owner. Built four years later, on the edge of civilized Georgetown Heights, the Dougal House exquisitely expressed Downing's precepts. And as Georgetown changed and tastes in architecture changed so did the Dougal House. While its architecture says much about mid to late nineteenth-century architecture in Georgetown and the United States, the Dougal House, through its non-architectural artifacts, suggests much about the changes in who owned property in Georgetown in that period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Architects Adams and Haskins's presentation drawing of the Dougal House is dated March 1854. How quickly the house was erected is unknown, but it appears on *Topographical Map of the District of Columbia, Surveyed in the Years 1856-1859*, drawn by Albert Boschke and published in 1861.

2. Original and subsequent owners and occupants:

Part of lot 35 embraced as ll of the Slip

1805	Deed (Liber N folio 11) (part of lot 35 Heirs of Chas Bealty To Thomas Bealty of Georgetown Thomas Sim Lee
1813	Deed (Liber AF folio 421) (lot 11) Dr. Charles A. Bealty To Luis and Representatives of John Baltzer, dec'd
1840	Deed (Liber WB 82 or 32 folio 333)

Margaret Baltzer, widow
Heirs at law of John Baltzer
To
Morris Adler

Early Title for part of lot 35 in Rock of Dunbarton

1792	Deed (Liber A folio 116) Patrick Beall To Thos. Beall
1802	Deed (Liber H folio 397) Thomas Beall To John Baltzer
1840	Deed (Liber WB 82 or 32 folio 333) All of lot 35 Heirs of John Baltzer To Morris Adler
1866	Deed in Trust (Liber RMH 29 folio 21) Morris Adler and wife Mary C. To Maurice Adler
1888	Deed of Exchange (Liber 1317 folio 37) Maurice J. Adler, Trustee William H. Dougal To Edward L. Dent (portion of lot west of house)
1908	Deed in Trust (Liber 3126 folio 99) Maurice J. Adler et al, Trustee To William Dougal, Jr.
1925(?)	Deed (?) (Liber 5540 folio 161) William M. Dougal et al. To Alfred T. Newbold

- 1925 Deed (Liber 5540 folio 166)
 Alfred T. Newbold and wife Glee D.
 To
 Grace N. Brandes
- 1926 Deed (Liber 5848 folio 466)
 Grace N. Brandes
 To
 Camille F. Jacob
- 1928 Trust (Liber 6111 folio 13)
 Harvey Jacob, wife Camille F. Jacob
 To
 Wilson B. Nairn, George H. Selden
- 1933 Deed (Liber 6744 folio 403)
 Wilson b. Nairn, George B. Selden
 To
 The Assoc. for Works of Mercy
- 1933 Deed (Liber 6765 folio 374)
 The Assoc. for Works of Mercy
 To Harvey D. Jacob
- 1933 Deed of Trust (Liber 6765 folio 383)
 Harry D. Jacob (Harvey ?), Camille F.
 To
 Chas. F. Wilson
 Hugh T. Nelson
- 1936 Deed (Liber 7011 folio 71)
 Chas. F. Wilson, Hugh T. Nelson
 To
 Assoc. for Works of Mercy
- 1940 Deed (Liber 7511 folio 453)
 Assoc. for Works of Mercy
 To
 Ruby J. Acree
- 1959 Deed (Liber 11266 folio 566)
 Ruby J. Acree
 To

Marion Oates Leiter

This chain of title largely replicates the one at the Peabody Room of the Georgetown Branch of the D.C. Public Library. That chain contains mistakes and omissions such as misspellings of the names of owners and the book numbers of some deeds. Names have been corrected where there was no question of the correct spelling and the citation for the last transaction were added from Mrs. Oatsie Charles's copy of the deed. Not all transactions have been listed as some of them refer to a parcel now separate.

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: According to notes on the architect's presentation drawing, it appears that Dougal contracted with J.W. Henderson to build the house.

4. Original plans and construction: The original architect's drawing shows a three bay wide house, two stories tall, with a lower, but two story wing to the west, about two bays wide.

5. Alterations and additions: Prior to 1959, when Marion Oates Leiter (now Mrs. Robert Charles) purchased the house, the main block had a third story behind a mansard roof added and a third story was added to the west wing. In 1959, she added the wing (pantry) west of the kitchen. Also according to Mrs. Charles, when she bought the house the original sandstone around the door and windows was too worn to save and was replaced with brick, and the house was painted. She also removed the large wooden cistern on the third floor, and the tall metal radiators placed in front of the first floor bay windows. In the 1970's a conservatory off the rear porch was designed, but never built. Outbuildings have also been repaired.

B. Historical Context:

Philip Ogilvie, former D.C. Archivist, contends that the history of Georgetown is the history of the Scottish Presbyterian merchants and tobacco farmers who settled Georgetown. The histories of several of the earliest and most important houses in Georgetown confirm Mr. Ogilvie's theory for eighteenth-century Georgetown, but as the Dougal House demonstrates, the later history of Georgetown is more complex.

William Henry Dougal married Mary Virginia Adler, the daughter of Morris Adler and Malvina Lutz Adler in 1851. Morris Adler was a German immigrant, member of Georgetown's Congress Street Church (Methodist Episcopal), a trustee of the Georgetown public schools, and a secretary in the local Masonic lodge. His wife was the daughter of a German immigrant. The Adlers owned the land the Dougal house was built on and the family retained ownership of the house until 1908 when it was transferred to his son, according to deed records. Morris Adler also owned the plot where the Adlers and Dougals are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery. Although the Adlers were married at home by a Methodist minister, it is not known if Adler was born a Methodist in Germany in 1799. The Dougals (whose name was originally MacDougal/Macdougal) did not belong to a Methodist church, according to Jane Donovan, Methodist church historian.

The 1861-1865 City Directory listed M.J. Adler and Company as hardware merchants on Bridge (M) Street in Georgetown so it is possible that Morris Adler had started the business and his son Maurice Julius Adler had taken it over by then.

A much more prominent and far wealthier Georgetown resident ---owner of Dumbarton Oaks --- and hardware merchant, Edward Linthicum, erected a miniature gothic church as his family tomb in Oak Hill cemetery on the plot adjacent to the Adler family. (See HABS No. DC-825 for Dumbarton Oaks and DC-249 and -172 for Oak Hill Cemetery.) The Adlers, Dougals, and Linthicums were neighbors not only in the cemetery, but along R Street, only separated by one block and, in fact, Adler sold part of his lot to Linthicum's heir. By the early to mid-nineteenth century, the assumed homogeneity of Georgetown Heights had given way to --- at least a small degree --- to a mixing of people of different religions, countries of origin, and professions.

William Dougal, unlike his father-in-law, was born in the United States (New Haven, Ct.) and was a professional. He was an engraver and painter, also working presumably as a contractor for the U.S. Treasury. (Published accounts of his title and dates of employment cannot be confirmed by Treasury Department records.) His son was also an engraver.

Two paintings by the elder William Dougal hang at 3259 R Street (and black and white photographs of them are at the Peabody Room of the Georgetown Branch of the D.C. Public Library). These paintings, looking north from R Street, vividly convey how unsettled, how natural the environment north of Georgetown Heights was even in the middle of the nineteenth century.

This impression that Wisconsin Avenue linked the civilization of Georgetown, which at ended at or on some blocks before R Street, with the wilderness directly north is conveyed with equal forcefulness in the Dougal House, as designed by Adams and Haskins. Typical of mid nineteenth-century American houses, it casts off the earlier classical revivals (Federal, Greek and Roman) and instead seemed vaguely north European with its deep overhang cornice and projecting porch and heavy window balconies. The resulting house was not one of Downing's rural villas, nor cottages, but yet was clearly not an urban dwelling. In keeping with Downing's precept of truth in domestic architecture, the Dougal House beautifully expressed its function as a home of mid-nineteenth century professional and artisan-engraver and painter- who lived on the edge of an sophisticated urban settlement.

Mr. Robert Charles was an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force in the Kennedy Administration and Mrs. Charles was a close enough friend of the Kennedys to be invited to private White House dinners. She is also a close friend of the Reagans. Mrs. Charles is a trustee of the Doris Duke Foundation.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Adams and Haskins's design is a fanciful design both appropriate for a reasonably well-off family (if William Dougal was not well-off at least his wife's family was) building in desirable Georgetown Heights and in keeping with current architectural tastes. But unlike the work of the more prominent architects such as John Notman in Philadelphia or James Renwick in New York and Georgetown and Washington, D.C., the Dougal house strived less to be a pure revival style such as the Gothic Revival of Renwick's Oak Hill Cemetery chapel and more importantly it did not try to be one of Downing's rural structures (of any of the styles acceptable to Downing). Instead the Dougal house was a frank articulation of its location between the urbane Georgetown and the rural reaches just north of Georgetown Heights. And the house was an equally frank articulation of a precept that even Downing might not have fully understood- that to achieve the picturesque quality so valued at the middle of nineteenth century it was permissible, perhaps even necessary to combine disparate elements that created a whole of greater interest and force than a harmonious whole cloth made of only one stylistic vocabulary.

2. Condition of fabric: Exterior, interior, and grounds are in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main block is a little more than 30 feet wide and nearly 40 feet deep, with an ell of the northwest facade that is approximately 15 feet by 20 feet deep, and a kitchen wing directly west of the ell is approximately 13 feet by 15 feet. The main block and ell are three stories tall, with a full basement. The kitchen wing is two stories with basement. Two bays project on the east facade and one on the north facade.

2. Foundations: Brick foundations are visible in the basement.

3. Walls: The walls are of common bond, with evidence of where sandstone was removed above the entrance door. As Mrs. Charles had the house painted, it is not always readily obvious where brick was filled to replace the deteriorated sandstone that was removed.

4. Structural system, framing: The structural system is load-bearing masonry.

5. Porches, stoops: Along the rear of the main block runs an elevated wooden porch approached by wooden steps on the east and west ends of the porch. The front porch is approached by steps with brick risers and stone treads. The front porch, which is a magnificent, exuberant piece of architecture is topped by a gable roof with exposed wooden rafters and finely detailed bargeboards. The roof is supported by heavy square (in plan) columns and pilaster, supported in turn by a powerful balustrade with handrail curving down to the stoop. Between the pilaster and the column of the porch, the balustrade has five squat, turned balusters. The space in the balustrade between this pilaster and the column at the front of the porch is filled by a

quatre-foil cut-out. The space directly above the quatre-foil and handrail is the upper sections of the two columns and there a mullion and rail create four open spaces with the bottom two capped by a rounded arch. The space above the rail is reversed so that the arch is at the bottom of the opening. This pattern creates a diamond design on the rail between the four openings. At the south face of the end column a double curved bracket juts out to support another quatre-foil directly below the roof cornice on the west and east faces of the porch. The double curve and quatre-foil are terminated by a pier, with turned and carved pendill, suspended from the cornice. On the front of the suspended piers are another set of double curves leading into curved arch under the front peak of the porch. At each of the junctions of the double curve and central curve is another turned and carved pendill. These brackets for the porch appear to have been echoed in the original roof eave details. (When Mrs. Charles bought the house, her friends urged that her first act be to remove the porch.) (Please see HABS photographs)

6. Chimneys: A single brick chimney penetrates the roof slightly northeast of the hatch at the center of the roof. A second chimney along the west wall of the kitchen wing was removed when the pantry was built.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: On the south or front elevation there is one doorway and on the rear elevation there are two on the main level and two at ground level. The double leaf main door has low swinging wooden gates in front. Above the door, an elaborate and substantial hood is supported by beaded consoles with cartouches, suggestive of family crests, below them. In turn, at the center of the door hood is another larger cartouche, with seashell motif, which is flanked by carved decorations, resembling ocean waves, sitting on top of the door hood's frieze. The frieze, itself, is decorated with a series of paired C curves, with leaves below. Aside from this ornate and powerful mood, the main door lacks an architrave. The basement doors are entirely without ornament. The only detailing on the rear door into the kitchen is a jack arch. Somewhat more elaborate are the tall French doors into the library, which have two transom windows above.

b. Windows: On the south (front) elevation, the two first story windows and the second story one above the porch were originally French doors with two fixed panes above. The first story windows still are French doors, but the second story has two bottom panes filled and is now a sash window. On the north elevation, the library windows are French doors. The windows are double sash windows with round arched tops, capped by drip hoods. As the windows vary as to how rounded the top is, the hoods vary as to how far they dip on the sides. The rear porch windows and east bays windows do not have hoods. The east bay closest to the south appears on the 1854 architect's drawing and appears original, but the second east bay has entirely different window surrounds and is most likely a twentieth-century addition. Most windows that are original are characterized by a thick mullion with a large pane to either side. Later windows such as the Mansard dormer windows and windows on the wings are more common sash windows with mullions consistent with the thickness of the muntins.

Two anomalies occur. On the west elevation closest to the south, the second story window is blind. On the kitchen wing closest to the west facade, the windows are tall, narrow, and single panes wide and four panes tall. The original drawing shows two such windows, on the first and second floors. The third floor of this wing, with its clapboard siding, is not original.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The vertical portion of the Mansard roof is executed in slate, consisting of diamond and hexagonal shaped pieces. The horizontal portion of that roof, which is hipped, is covered in a standing seam metal roof as is the front porch (gable) and rear porch and pantry roofs (both three-part hips), as well as the roofs over the two bays on the east facade (variations on three-part hip).

The shape and covering of the kitchen wing roof has a very slight slope and is probably covered with tar.

b. Cornice, eaves: The south, east, north, and half of the west sides of the main block have a cornice added when the Mansard Roof was added. The addition of a third story on the kitchen wing eliminated the northern half of the cornice on the main block. The cornice on the kitchen wing is undistinguished, consisting of a continuous dentil beneath the cornice gutter. The main block cornice places two large brackets at the ends and between the window bays, with six smaller brackets filling the frieze between the paired brackets. On the east bay closest to the south facade, the cornice is a jigsaw pattern culminated in a circle. The rear bay has paired, thin brackets at the corners.

c. Dormers: There are three dormers on the south elevation, and two each on the other elevations. Each dormer has paneled pilasters, with scrolled ears at the bottom, supporting arched pediments with a truncated keystone. Architect's drawings show that at least two variations on the dormer were considered and the other design seemed better suited to brownstone than the wood, the material used on the dormer architrave.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First Floor: The front doors open to the entrance hall, which has the stairs along the west wall. Opposite the stairs is the door into the drawing room and it is connected by a door to the library directly behind it. In turn, double doors connect the library to the dining room, which is west of the library. The dining room is on axis with the entrance hall and connected by a door. Two doorways, to either side of an elevator (which was originally a stack of closets), connect the dining room to the kitchen, which in turn is connected to a pantry, with stairs to the basement. Beneath the stairs up to the second floor, the stairs to the basement were removed and a bathroom added. The addition of the elevator and bathroom were made by Mrs. Charles.

b. Second floor: At the second floor landing of the stairs, it bifurcates to two suites. To the left (or west) is the bedroom complex of Mr. Charles. To the right and a few feet higher is the bedroom suite, office, and bathroom of Mrs. Charles. She stated that she removed a partition between the two rooms at the northeast end of the house to create her larger bedroom.

c. Third floor: This bifurcated floor consists of offices and guest quarters.

d. Basement: The basement consists of servant quarters and work and storage areas, with the spaces roughly corresponding to the rooms on the first floor. A full height opening with a stone threshold has been cut, at an unknown date, where the west basement wall of the entrance hall intersects the south wall of the basement wall of the kitchen wing. That is to say that the opening is immediately north of the intersection of the west wall of the entrance hall bay and the south wall of the kitchen wing.

The ceiling is unfinished, with the joists, pipes, and wires visible.

Two plans, labeled No. 5 and dated 1854, by Adams & Haskins show two stairs, a main stairs that starts on the south wall rather than the west wall, and a secondary, servants stairs. If this was the actual plan than it appears that the original entrance hall was larger at the expense of the dining room and drawing room. All traces of the servants stairs are gone.

2. Stairway: An open-string, open well stairway runs along the west wall, splits at the second floor landing and the third floor landings to provide access to the rooms on the second and third floors in the main wing and to provide access to the rooms on the second and third floors in the kitchen wing, which are a few steps lower than the upper floors in the main block.

The newel, handrail, and spindles -all executed in an unpainted, hardwood -are among the interior's most attractive features, being substantial, without being massive, they provide a focus to the entrance hall and the continuous flow of the handrail creates a sense of movement up through the three stories. The string's curve culminates in a bulb.

3. Flooring: Wooden flooring runs north-south in the entrance hall and dining room, while the library and drawing room are carpeted. Most of the dining room floor is covered by a rug and the entrance hall is mostly covered by a runner. Also the stairs are carpeted. The kitchen and pantry have tiles.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are plaster with the entrance hall wallpapered, as are the dining room and drawing room. The library is paneled. The library's bookcases have ogee arches. The crown molding is relatively simple. In the drawing room it consists of five friezes and two soffits, but no other decoration. That room also has a simple baseboard. The same treatment occurs in the dining room, while in the entrance hall, the crown molding has a ovolo profile, of probably modern construction.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doors between rooms were replaced by Mrs. Charles. The round arched main entrance has a wide door surround which culminates in two bands of reeding near the outside edge. The other door surrounds are rather simple, with only one or two bands of reeding and probably are modern. Only in the dining room are door surrounds more elaborate with bulls-eyes corner blocks and plinths and paneled jambs and heads.

b. Windows: The window surrounds appear less altered or at least older than most of the door surrounds as the window surrounds have sills, jambs, and heads with continuous reeding or other ornamentation. In the library and along the south wall of the drawing room, the windows are French windows of several panes (usually eight). When Mrs. Charles bought the house, tall metal radiators blocked several of the windows and she had them removed.

6. Decorative features and trim: The only mantel on the first floor is along the north wall of the drawing room and the mantel, which is English, was added by Mrs. Charles. The white marble mantel has fluted pilasters capped by rosettes. The frieze has a central rectangular panel of an urn with reeding flanking the panel. (A second flue was added to the chimney on the north, by enlarging the south wall of the library behind the chimney.)

7. Hardware: No original hardware was evident.

8. Mechanical systems: The house continues to be heated with enclosed metal radiators and Mrs. Charles had central air conditioning installed.

D. Site:

1. General setting, orientation, and outbuildings: The house faces south towards R Street and across the street is the Georgetown Branch of the D.C. Public Library, but at approximately the same time the house was built, the High Reservoir was built on the site of the library. Several steps lead from the sidewalk up to the walk to the house, but a nineteenth century photograph indicates that the street was subsequently lowered so originally the house was not as elevated. The photograph also shows that the current metal fence replaced an earlier wooden one. At the southeast corner of the property, a wide driveway runs past the house, with a short run of steps to the house, to a garage and a separate roadway that runs to an alley beyond the rear fence. Off this roadway, a path to the west leads to a one story brick structure used as a gardener's residence and believed by Mrs. Charles to have once been the site of a dairy or stable. The manicured front, side and rear yards have extensive hedges and trees offering privacy and shade. In addition there are fish ponds, waterfall, and sculpture creating a tranquil garden retreat only separated from heavily traveled Wisconsin Avenue by a restaurant's parking lot.

2. Historic landscape design: Unknown

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Mrs. Robert Charles described the house when she bought and at least some of the changes she had made. Her assistant Charlotte Price supplied copies of the original blueprints and those for Mrs. Charles's projects and other records. Also, in Mr. Charles's bedroom hangs the architect's presentation drawing of 1854.

The Peabody Room of the Georgetown branch of the D.C. Public Library had an early photograph of the house, chain of title, and newspaper clippings. Also consulted were the published histories of Georgetown at that library and the library of the Historical Society of Washington. The Washingtoniana Room of the Martin Luther King branch of the D.C. Public Library also has newspaper clippings.

Prepared by : Bill Lebovich, architectural historian, October 1999

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Georgetown Documentation Project was sponsored by the Commission of Fine Arts and undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) of the National Park Service. Principals involved were Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, HABS/HAER. The documentation was undertaken in two phases. The summer 1998 team was supervised by John P. White, FAIA, Professor of Architecture, Texas Tech University; and architecture technicians Robert C. Anderson, Boston Architectural Center; Aimee Charboneau, Tulane University; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Adam Maksay, United States/International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) architect from the Transylvania Trust. Historic research was initiated by Bryan C. Green, historian, Richmond, Virginia, during this summer. The summer 1999 team was supervised by Roger S. Miller, architect, Alexandria, Virginia, and architecture technicians David Benton, The Catholic University of America; Edward Byrdy, The Catholic University of America; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Clara Albert, US/ICOMOS architect from the Transylvania Trust. The project historian, and author of the written reports, was William Lebovich, architectural historian, Chevy Chase, Maryland. The photography was undertaken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, and James Rosenthal, photographic assistant.